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**MINUTES**  
OF THE  
**THIRTY-FOURTH ANNUAL SESSION**  
OF THE  
**NORTH RIVER**  
**BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.**  
HELD WITH  
**SARDIS CHURCH,**  
**WINSTON COUNTY, ALA., SEPT. 26TH, 1868.**

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## MINUTES.

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1st. The Delegates from the several Churches composing the North River Baptist Association met at Sardis Church, Winston county, Alabama, on Saturday before the fourth Sabbath in September, 1868. The Introductory Sermon was delivered by Eld. L. B. Harbin, from Mark 13th chapt., 34th verse. "For the son of man is as a man taking a far journey," &c.

2d. After half an hour recess, the delegates assembled in the Meeting-House and the association was called to order and prayer offered by the former Moderator.

3d. Called for the letters from the several churches, which were read and the names of the delegates enrolled as follows:

Fayetteville—A. F. Bell and J. E. Bell.

Pilgrim's Rest—A. T. Rushing and E. C. Eatus.

New Bethel—

Hopewell—Eld. A. M. King.

Shady Grove—Ira Griffin.

Mt. Olive—Eld. B. V. Stairy and J. S. Ford.

Mt. Pleasant—

Bethabara—Eld. L. B. Harbin and Wm. A. Edmons.

Mt. Joy—Eld. R. Atkins; brethren, M. Shirey and Thomas Harris.

Mt. Sinai—Aaron Kelly and C. W. Johnson.

Bethlehem—J. F. McDuff.

New Prospect—E. N. Kitchens, J. B. Mooney and Samuel Snoddy.

Sardis—Eld. T. M. Martin and brethren, A. Ward and J. S. Wotton.

Liberty Grove—E. Sumner, John Staggs and John Keaton.

Mt. Joy, 2—T. R. Amerson.

Union W. C.—J. L. Romine and John L. Wright.

Shiloh—N. R. Grace.

Corinth—E. W. Wright.

Providence—Eld. L. Williams, and brethren, Wm. Randolph, Wm. Cobb and J.

Handly.

Pleasant Grove—Eld. D. Manasco and bro. James M. Thomas.

Oak Grove—James Hilton and Wm. Tucker.

Mt. Moriah—Wm. H. Brazier and J. J. Devor.

Union—James Wade and G. W. McDonald.

Salem—A. J. Files and J. M. Files.

4th. Then proceeded to the election of Moderator and Clerk, for the ensuing year, which resulted in the choice of Eld. L. B. Harbin Moderator, and D. Manasco Clerk.

5th. Opened a door for the admission of Churches wishing to become members of our body, when petitionary letters were presented by the following Churches, viz: Friendship Church, who had been dropped for failing to represent herself, presented a letter by her delegates, viz: T. B. Hyche, F. A. Gilbert and J. C. Hyche.

Also a letter by her delegates from Salim, a newly constituted Church. The churches were rec'd and the right hand of fellowship extended by the Moderator.

6. Ministers not delegates were invited to seats and the right hand of fellowship was extended to them by the Moderator.

7. The following Committees were then appointed:

On Arrangement—Eld. R Atkins and Bros. Wm Randolph, M Shirey and the Moderator and Clerk.

On Documents—Elds. B V Shirly, A M King and Bros. James Hilton, J F McDuff, Wm A Edmons, A T Bell and J E Bell.

On Finance—Bros J Griffin, A J Files and L Williams.

On Preaching—A Ward, Wm Cobb, A T Rushing, G W McDonald and Wm. Brazier.

On Circular Letter—Elds R Atkins B V Shirly and Bros A F Bell and L Williams

On Sabbath Schools—J T McDuff, Is Wotton and James Hilton.

8. The Committee on Preaching reported as follows: Elder B V Shirly to preach to night, followed by Elder L Williams. Prayer meeting to-morrow morning at 9 o'clock, conducted by Bro Wm Randolph.

9. Adjourned until Monday morning, 8 o'clock.

SUNDAY, Sept. 27th.

10. The stand was filled at 11 o'clock by Elder L B Harbin, at 2 o'clock by Elder A M King and at night by Elder D Manasco, who preached to large attentive congregations, and we have abundant reason to believe that great good was the result of the day's labor.

MONDAY MORNING, Sept. 28.

11. Met pursuant to adjournment. Prayer by the Moderator. Proceeded to appoint a committee on nomination as follows: A F Bell, A T Rushing and Wm A Edmons.

12. Called for and adopted the report of the committee of arrangement. And the committee was discharged.

13. Read the Constitution, Rules of Decorum and Articles of Faith.

14. Called for correspondence and received a package of Minutes from the Yellow Creek Association. No messenger nor letter.

15. Returned correspondence as follows: To the Tuskaloosa Association, Elders Wm L Jones, B. V. Shirly and Bros Wm A Edmons, I. Griffin. To the Yellow Creek, Elds A M King and L B Harbin and Bros A T Bell and Is Wotton. To the Canaan, Elds D Manasco, L Williams and Bros James Hilton and E N. Kitchens.

Moved that we apply for correspondence with the Muscle Shoals Association.



5

Eld T M Martin and Bros James Hilton, Wm Tucker and Wm Randolph.  
Called for and adopted the report of the Committee on Sabbath Schools, as follows: "We, your Committee on Sabbath Schools, beg leave to report, That we can say nothing more than has been said by the committee of last year. We recommend the following, viz: That Pastors of churches should urge the necessity of Sabbath Schools being organized in all the churches. We fully appreciate and would congratulate the churches which have already engaged in this important work. All of which is respectfully submitted."

JAS M. McDUFF, Chairman.

18 Called for and received the report of the book agent, as follows: No. funds on hand, but a few dollars worth of books. D MANASCO, B. A.

19 Read and received the letters to the different Associations.

20 Called for the report of District Meetings, which was as follows:

1st District Meeting to be held with Bethabara Church, to convene on Saturday before the 4th Sabbath in July, 1869. Eld R Atkins to preach the introductory sermon. Eld L B Harbin, alternate.

Appointed the next Association to be held with Bethlehem Church Tuscaloosa county, to convene on Saturday before the 4th Sabbath in September, 1869, six miles East of New Lexington, Ala. Eld J C Jones to preach the Introductory sermon. Eld T M Martin, alternate. D. Manasco to preach at 11 o'clock, on Sabbath, to use a subject of his own choice. Eld R Atkins, alternate.

21 Appointed B. V. Shirey to write the next Circular Letter, upon the subject of the Final Perseverance of the Saints.

22 Appointed Elds. L B Harbin and D Manasco messengers to the Baptist State Convention and ordered that they should be paid for their services.

2d District Meeting to convene with Providence Church on Saturday before the 3d Sabbath in August, 1869. Eld T M Martin to preach the introductory sermon. Eld L Williams, alternate. D. Manasco to preach at 11 o'clock, upon a subject of his own choice. Eld R M Atkins, alternate.

23 Called for and received the report of the committee on documents as follows: After examining all the documents put into our hands, we find the following queries: From Hopewell Church, viz - Is it right to receive testimony from the world? To which we suggest the following answer: As a general rule, we believe it is not right. But there might be cases in which a church may be justifiable in receiving testimony from the world. Also, a question from New Prospect church, asking a definition of the word "extortion." All of which is respectfully submitted to your consideration.

24 The report of the committee was rejected by the body; and the following was substituted: To the question "is it right to receive testimony from the world?" we answer No. To the query "what is extortion?" we answer that we believe extortion is taking the advantage of the necessities of the needy, and exacting an unreasonable price for property.

25 Called for and adopted the report of the committee on Circular Letter, as follows: We, your committee to whom was referred the Circular Letter, report, that we have had the same under consideration and recommend it to the body for theirs, Respectfully submitted.  
R. ATKINS, Ch'm.

26 Called for and received the report of the committee on finance, as follows:

We, your committee on finance, have received from churches \$39 80 as a Minute fund and \$18.30 for Associational purposes ; making the sum total of \$58.10, all of which is herewith transmitted.

IRA GRIFFIN, Ch'm.

27 Called for and received the Treasurers report, as follows : In account with the North River Association, \$60.75; distributed, \$60 65, balance in Treasury 10 cents. Funds disposed of as follows. Paid for Minutes, \$34.85; to L. B Harbin, 7 90; to D Manasco, 4.30; to W A Edmons, 3 60; Clerk's fees, 10.00.

28 Appointed D. Manasco Treasurer for the ensuing year.

29 The following resolution was then unanimously adopted :

Resolved, That whereas we learn that there has been a desire manifested upon the part of the members of the Lost Creek Association to unite the Baptist & We, the North River Association, feeling the same desire at heart, hereby order the appointment of five messengers to bear a letter to the Lost Creek Association asking them to appoint a general meeting of the Baptist to be composed of three delegates from each church, of both orders, to ascertain whether the long existing difficulties between the two associations can be settled or not.

Resolved further, That we advise the churches in our union to participate in said meeting.

30 Then proceeded to appoint the following brethren as messengers to Lost Creek Association, viz : Eld L B Harbin and D. Manasco and Bros Wm Randolph, J B Mooney and E Wright

31 Read and received the letter to the Lost Creek association.

32 The following resolution was then adopted :

Resolved That the Clerk be authorized to have as many Minutes printed as he can for the fund he has on hand, and that he have \$10.00 for his services.

33 Then proceeded to appoint R Atkins distributing agent for the first district and D Manasco for the second

34 The following resolution was then adopted : Resolved that we tender our thanks to the Moderator and Clerk for their promptness in discharging their duties.

35 The following resolution was unanimously adopted : Resolved, That we tender our thanks to Sardis Church and vicinity for the kind hospitalities shown us during this harmonious session of the association.

Read and approved the Minutes of the present session.

Adjourned to meet with Bethlehem Church, Tuskalooosa county, on Saturday before the 4th Sabbath in September, next Prayer by the Clerk. Benediction by Eld B V Shirly.

L. B. HARBIN, Moderator.

D. MANASCO, Clerk.

## CIRCULAR LETTER.

DEAR BRETHREN :—Having been appointed by your honorable body at its last session to write upon the subject of communion, the following are presented as the best collection of ideas that I can gather from the limited resources to which I am permitted to appeal : It is declared in Scripture that the Lord, the same night that he was betrayed, took bread and blessed it and gave it to his disciples and said, take eat, this is my body. And he took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to his disciples and said drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Mat. 26:26 to 28 ; Mark 14:22,25 ; Luke 22:19,20. From these passages we see that this ordinance was instituted by our Lord when he was upon the earth, and that the event which it was to commemorate was yet future. The broken bread, we learn, was an emblem of the Savior's broken body upon the cross for sinners; and the wine an emblem of his shed blood. The eating of one and drinking of the other are essential to this ordinance. That this is a representation of the death of Christ for his people ; and the partaking is an expression of our faith in Christ as the Savior, who by his blood has made atonement for sinners. It is a token of assent to the new covenant, therefore all christians are under obligations to observe it. It and baptism are two great monuments, standing from the days of Jesus Christ until now, and will stand until his second coming, in despite of all the combined powers of darkness, aided by the world. And they teach by expressive symbols.

By receiving the bread and wine the communicant declares his entire reliance upon Christ for salvation, and sole dependence upon him for spiritual life, as natural life is sustained by food and drink. It is a spiritual feast, at which the Savior is present as the spiritual head. Through it he assures each member of his condescending love. The sincere communicant honors the Savior's cross, and testifies that the blood he spilt thereon is the only source of his peace, hope and joy. The Savior assures him of pardon and eternal life through the efficacy of his sacrifice. The death of Christ is the most momentous event in the world's history, and its expiatory nature the most important doctrine to be sustained. It should be the sincere desire of the heart of every communicant to show the Lord's death ; if he has any other intention, he is guilty before God.

The Savior said, "do this in remembrance of me," That this command was intended for all christians, and so understood, is evident from Acts 2:42,20,7. That it is to be continued until the end of the world, is plain from Cor. 19:11,25—"Ye do show the Lord's death till he come."

So, we are enabled to conclude that we cannot be too careful in receiving it; and if we should use such care in receiving it, how should they proceed to whom the Lord has referred the keeping of his house ? Have they the right to administer it to whomsoever they will ? Or should they not turn the sacred pages of holy writ and see to whom they are authorized to administer ? Certainly this is the duty of every humble follower of Christ. We learn from Scripture that those in ancient times continued steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine and unto those they broke bread. So if we consider that any of our christian brethren have departed from the Apostles doctrine, we must feel that we are invested with more power than they did before we can break bread to them. Let us trace the history of Church, and we will find where many of our brethren have laid down their lives rather than change the usages and customs established by Jesus and his Apostles. Let us think that the doctrines of the Bible have been declared by God's servants at almost their latest breath, who were dying because they would not change the Apostolic usage. And shall we change them because we love our brethren, who are refusing to do what God requires of them. Did not Christ have the right to set up his kingdom upon the earth and establish such laws and ordinances for its government as it pleased him ? Certainly he did. Then have you or I or any council of earth the right to change them ? I answer no. The martyrs thought they had no such right.—Rather than do it they suffered the pains of death. According to history many of our



brethren died before they would accept of infant sprinkling as valid baptism. And shall we, because we love our brethren, and rather than hurt their feelings, accept of it and declare by our acts that it is valid?

From the best information I can gain, it is a lamentable truth that some of the Baptist of our country have done this. Yet, I have abundant reason to conclude that were I to approach those brethren upon the subject that they would with an honest heart deny the charge and tell me they had been guilty of no such thing. But to that I would reply, if you will suffer me to reason with you I will certainly convince you. Have you not administered the Lord's supper to persons who were sprinkled in infancy? Of course, you answer yes. I ask you then why you did not invite that young convert whom you received as a candidate for baptism just before your communion? You answer because he was not baptised. You tell me that all denominations (except the Quakers) admit that baptism is a prerequisite to church relationship, and I exactly agree with you in that; the young convert notwithstanding you have all reasons to believe that he is a Christian, yet you do not feel at liberty to invite him because he is not baptised. We all must admit that if we were to administer the supper to persons unbaptised we would abolish the ordinance of baptism and thereby declare that God had made a requisition upon us that was not necessary, which I hope to die before I commit such a crime. I ask you then did you not say by your acts when you invited those pædo-baptist brethren to commune with you that their baptism was valid, thereby doing that which our ancient brethren refused, even unto death? I would to God that all would lay down tradition and prejudice and take up the Bible and follow its requisitions. I feel that I can say of a truth, that were it in my power, I would prepare not only all denominations, but the world itself and grasp them in these poor arms and fly to the paradise of God and dwell with them forever; but shall I change God's laws! God forbid. I ask you, affectionately, what was Christ's last command? To teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I command you, &c. He first commanded his followers to teach and then to baptize and then teach them to observe all things, &c. Let us then follow our Savior's command and not teach them to show forth the death of Christ before they are baptised, nor agree with the leaders of the Mother of Harlots and say by our acts that it is right to change the ordinances of Jesus Christ to suit our own tastes. He said Baptizing them, which word is translated from the Greek word Baptizontes, which means immersing them. If he had intended his people to be sprinkled, he would have said Rantizontes—sprinkling them. There is hardly to be found the work of an ancient Lexicographer, of any note, but what admits that the original meaning of the word Baptizo, was immersion (John Calvin not excepted) and that was the ancient usage. We are told in history that the first instance of sprinkling that ever was known was in case of a dying man who dreaded to meet his God without being baptised and who was not able to be immersed. The clergy concluded that he might be sprinkled. We notice, also, that very anciently children were admitted into societies. And the women complained that their children were weakly and asked for them to be sprinkled. In case of weakly children it was admitted. So one thing led to another, until it was concluded that it would do! Do! What! a substitute do for God's law? As much as to say to God, "I know as well as you do, you have required us to be wet all over when we are baptised, but it is not necessary, and therefore we will be sprinkled." Why not substitute rum, gin, brandy or whisky for the wine, and say that it will do? Or fiddling and dancing, drinking or any worldly engagement for repentance? Or like Alexander Campbell and his followers, substitute the submission of oneself to the ordinances that belong to the house of God and live a moral life, for the new birth, and say that it will do! And not only this, but the changing of the entire Bible may be done with the same propriety. Paul wrote: "Now I beseech you brethren, MARK them which cause divisions among you contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned and avoid them, for they are such as serve not our



Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly." Again : "Now I command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw from every brother that walk disorderly and not after the tradition which ye received from us." Thes. 2:3,6. You who read this, will you not heed it, when you are about to invite those who refuse to obey the commandments of God to commune with you ? "If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed."

Thousands, I suppose, will read this and I ask you affectionately, do all denominations obey the requisitions of the Bible ? You answer no. How then can you invite them to commune with you. Is this not accompanying with them. If it is, is it not wrong to invite them. Had you not better say by word and act to your brethren that they are wrong and show them the right way. Think of this prayerfully.

I would say to our brethren in general, that only here and there are a few that believe in open communion, and I am of the opinion that, while some of the top branches of the tree may wave here and there with the fascinating breeze of popularity, the stem is standing steady, deep-rooted in eternal truth, and despising alike the wildest blast and the powers of decay. Nor would it be surprising if a century hence the excrescence had passed away, and if our common denominational parent stood before the world, "Fair as the morn, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

D. MANASCO.

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